He foresees the abundance of the garden overflowing from his table to those of his friends and family. In March, it is not possible to truly believe that there will ever be too many tomatoes, too many zucchini, too many cucumbers. Each seed in the brightly colored envelope, each small budding plant, is precious and deserving of an opportunity to grow. Each is a gamble, but a gamble in which the gardener believes the odds are on his side. And why not? God is also on his side. Not all the plants will make it, but enough will, and those survivors will often exceed his most fecund imaginings.

West Virginia is full of master gardeners. Their pantries and cellars are treasure houses filled with jewel-tone quart jars of ruby tomatoes, emerald green beans, and sapphire blueberries. Crystal quilted jelly jars hold not precious unguents, but the ambrosia of the gods—homemade jams, jellies, and preserves distilled from the freshest strawberries, plums, cherries, quinces, apples, and blackberries. West Virginia's home canners are well prepared to cope with the bounteous overflow of the overambitious gardener.

To be a gardener is not only to be optimistic, but also to be patient. If something does not work out this year, there is always a different scheme next year. Over time, even the most scraggly sapling will reach majestic maturity, towering over the landscape and altering the microclimate of the yard with its shade and its earthmoving roots. The sun-loving flowers near it will gradually be replaced by those which tolerate increasing amounts of shade. No garden is a static place—how could it be?—filled with so much polite but fierce competition among its denizens, and always under attack by invading insects and dreaded diseases—black spot, to be sure, rather than the Black Plague, but dreaded, nonetheless.

To be a gardener is to be close to the Creator, to follow in His example. You see, God made the country; man made the town. To be, as Shakespeare said, holding up Adam's profession, that is what it is to be a gardener. We each try to create, at least in our dreams, our own small Eden. We learn the great lessons of life as we cultivate patience and nurture our optimism. In a garden one sees, up close—up close, up real close—the great mysteries of birth, life, struggle, death, yes, and renewal, writ small enough to comprehend and only then, to translate into some larger understanding that may, with age, approach wisdom. My chaplain will say, in a garden, God speaks to us simply, in the language of flowers.

The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth,
One is nearer God's Heart in the garden
Than anywhere else on earth.

So said Dorothy Frances Gurney, and surely her words are even more true in the spring garden than at any other time of year. It gives me joy to watch the greening of the earth, once again, and to witness the triumph of each little bulb and each little bud as it bursts forth, victorious over the chill of winter. I am filled with warmth that is easy to share, as I and my colleagues in Adam's profession emerge from our winter hibernation into the soft spring air and, with smiling faces, dream of spring.

The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in His Heaven—
All is right with the world.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, let me thank the Senator from West Virginia. In many ways, you have never really heard spring described until you have heard it described by the distinguished Senator from West Virginia. It also fits with something I come to the floor to talk about.

FAMILY FARMERS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, we have over 2,000 family farmers who have arrived in Washington, DC, this morning. In other times and other circumstances, they would be preparing for spring planting.

Spring is a time for farmers to begin thinking about getting to the field to plant their seeds and do the work family farmers do. But instead of preparing for spring planting, 2,000 family farmers are here in Washington, DC, today.

I intend to leave this Chamber and have lunch with them. They are holding a ''farmer's share lunch'', just steps from the Capitol on the lawn in the upper Senate park beside the Russell Building. A customer buying this same lunch at a restaurant or in some other venue in Washington, DC would pay $10. These farmers are charging the portion of the food dollar they get: From a $10 lunch, they get approximately 39 cents. So over in the park, farmers will be providing lunch for 39 cents to demonstrate how little of America's food dollar family farmers are getting.

We have such a serious problem on America's family farms. Two thousand of those family farmers have come to Washington, DC, to say to the Federal Government that the public policy dealing with family farmers simply isn't working. If it is in the interests of our country to preserve a network of family farms to produce America's food—if those are our policy interests in America—then we must change public policy because the current farm program does not work.

There is a fellow in North Dakota named Dave Smith. He is a farmer in Makoti, ND. Frankly, I have never met Dave Smith. He calls himself the Flying Farmer. He has developed a hobby of jumping over stock cars. He builds a ramp, jumps these cars, and dives over to the other side. He wears a helmet and performs at the county fairs and the State fairs.

I have seen him do these tricks a couple of times and have always wondered what would persuade someone to do these things?

Let me tell you how he got in the ''Guinness Book of World Records''. Dave Smith, the Flying Farmer, from Makoti, ND, set a world record by driving in reverse for 500 miles at an average speed of 34 miles per hour.

I am thinking to myself: Why would someone want to do that? But then I recognized that it reminds me of public policy as it affects family farmers, an endurance race in the wrong direction.

The question is, What do we do to stop this movement in the wrong direction and start it in the right direction? What do we do for family farmers?

I have on previous occasions talked in the Senate about what one finds when going to Europe. Go to the European countryside, visit with their farmers and go to the small towns that rely on families who live off the land. Get a feeling for how things are going in rural Europe.

Farmers are doing well in Europe. Small towns are doing fine in Europe. There is life; one can feel it. One can sense it. Why? Because Europe has decided that as a matter of public policy, the kind of economy they want is an economy that has food production based on the family unit. They want to maintain and retain family farmers in their future. It is a deliberate public policy in Europe. They have been hungry, and they don't intend to go hungry again. They want broad-based ownership of food production in Europe.

I found it interesting that the European trade representatives, who are often vilified—and perhaps I do it from time to time—talked about trade in agriculture in the context of families and communities when I met with them at the WTO meeting in Seattle. ''Multifunctionality'' is the term they used. They talked about the impact on family farmers and the relationship to building communities as a result of a network of farms in the countryside.

Our trade negotiators look at trade through the pristine view of one word—markets, as though it doesn't have anything to do with families or communities. As if somehow there is no relationship between virtue and math when it comes to the question of profits and losses. I want to talk for a couple of minutes about the fallacy of all of that.

These days, when there is so much economic prosperity in so much of our country, and we are blessed with so many things, we find that in the granaries, garages and in the machine sheds of America's family farms, families are gathering trying to figure out: How do we get this equipment ready for the field work in the spring to plant a crop? Will our banker lend us the money to buy seeds and fuel and fertilizer, for example, to once again try

to make a living on the family farm? Or are we now going to lose our dream? Will we, after 30 years of trying, lose the opportunity to continue farming this year because prices have collapsed and our trade agreements have not been good for agriculture?

Interest rates are going up. So many other things are confronting the farmer over which they have no control.

I will show a few charts that describe what is happening to America's family farms. The families who have come to town, the 2,000 of them, to say there is something wrong that needs to be fixed, here is what they are confronted with. Look what has happened to the farmer's share of the retail beef dollar. It has dropped precipitously.

This chart shows the farmer's share of the retail pork dollar—it is almost interchangeable—a dramatic collapse in 19 years. For North Dakota, where we raise a great deal of grain, this chart shows the farmer's share of the cereal grains dollar. Some might say, well, we are importing a lot of food; consumers are able to access cheaper food. Have you been to the grocery store lately and taken a look at the bar codes of hamburgers or bread or that which is made from cereal grain or livestock? Have you noticed that food prices have come down? I don't think so. Grain prices have collapsed.

For a while, we had a very substantial collapse in livestock prices. In fact, at one point about a year ago, a hog that brought the hog producer $20 on the market for an entire hog had its meat sold for $300. So what happened between the $20 the farmer got for selling an entire hog and the $300 that was charged at the grocery store counter for the meat from the very same hog? The middle folks, the folks who handle all of that, are making a lot of money. The farmer is left with the carcass.

I will mention a couple of other items with respect to the family farm. Farmers have come to the Nation's Capital to ask for a change. We passed a piece of farm legislation some years ago. I voted against it, but nonetheless it passed. It essentially pulled the rug out from under family farmers. It said they should all just operate in the marketplace.

That sounds good enough, if the marketplace were a fair marketplace and farmers were involved in fair competition with others who produce food around the world. That is not the case. Our trade agreements injure family farmers rather than help them. They don't have an opportunity to pay a fair interest rate because the Federal Reserve Board is jacking up the cost of money in a manner that is totally unjustified. They deal with monopolies in every direction they turn. If they want to put their grain on a railroad, the railroad is overcharging them. What is going to happen is if they are going to sell their cattle to packing companies, three or four packing companies are involved in 80 to 85 percent of all the steer slaughter in this country. It is the same with pork and lamb. Family farmers are competing in a game in which the deck is stacked.

We have a policy establishment in Washington that views all of this through a very clear lens. It is a limited vision, but the direction they look appears clear to them. This, in some of their minds, is kind of a ''stuff Olympics.'' Those who produce the most stuff get the most medals, even if you are producing stuff you already have too much of and not producing what you need. For example, in rural America, if you are producing what nurtures and strengthens communities, that is irrelevant according to these folks. The policy establishment says that is not what we are about. We are about the ''stuff Olympics.'' Those who produce the most stuff win.

Of course, that is not a proper way to look at who we are and what we want to be. The markets are fine, but markets are not always fair. We, as a country, have a right, as Europe has a right and has done, to decide what kind of economy we want. What kind of things do we want produced from the arrangements of production? If we say we need better communities, stronger families living on the land and a network of producers producing America's food, then we need to question whether our economic arrangements contribute to that end. Clearly, the answer now is no.

Should we not support the form of agriculture that contributes to that kind of economy and that kind of society? What is the farm program really for? These farmers have come to town saying the farm program doesn't work. What is it really for?

In my judgment, we don't need a farm program. We could abolish it if its goal is not simple and singular. We should have a farm program that is designed to support and sustain a network of families living on America's agricultural land. If that is not the goal of the farm program, then we don't need one. If someone wants to farm an entire county, God bless them, but they don't need the Government's help. But when prices collapse, if families who are living on that farm don't have a bridge across those price valleys, they are simply not going to make it from one side to the other.

My belief is that the contribution a network of family farms makes to our country is irreplaceable and invaluable. Let me tell my colleagues about that contribution, that lifestyle, because I come from a State I dearly love. It embodies those values that America needs more of.

We have a man and a wife in Sentinel Butte, ND, who own a gas station. Perhaps I have told the Senate about this before. They are near retirement age and don't want to keep the gas station open all day. This is a town of under 100 people. They decided that when they close at 1 o'clock in the afternoon, they would hang the key on a nail. If you need gas, you drive up and take the key, unlock the pump, and fill up. Then you are supposed to make a note that you did that.

Yes, that is true. Yes, that happens in my home State, a small community of under 100 people who understand the value of the small town cafe, the hub of life in a small community, and can't afford to keep the small town restaurant open. How do they do it? A signup sheet. Everybody in town has to volunteer to work for nothing to keep the restaurant open.

Yes, that is the way the restaurant works in Havana, ND. Tuttle, ND, a town of under 100 people, lost their grocery store. What to do? They could not find anybody to start a grocery store. So the town itself—the community—built a grocery store. Yes, the town owns the grocery store because that is the kind of town they want and the kind of life they want.

I may have told the Senate about the woman who owns the flower shop in Mott, ND. A town 14 miles from Regent, my hometown. My parents are buried in the cemetery in Regent, ND, a town of 270 people. We always send flowers to my mother's grave on Mother's Day from the Mott Florist Shop. They are always apologetic for charging a couple of dollars extra to send them to the Regent cemetery, which is 14 miles away.

The Mott Florist Shop is quite a place. This year, my brother called them—he or I usually call them—and he asked them to deliver flowers for Memorial Day. He said, ''By the way, I forgot to call on Mother's Day when we usually order flowers for my mother's grave.'' She said, ''That's all right. I figured you forgot so we sent flowers over to your mother's grave anyway. I figured I would send you a bill later, and if you paid it, OK; if not, that's OK, too.''

Where does that happen in this country? It is pretty special to have those kinds of communities and people.

About the same time that happened, I read an article in the newspaper—and I don't mean to be pejorative about New York City because it is a wonderful city, but a fellow died on the subway and he continued riding 4 or 5 hours on the subway before somebody discovered he was dead. Big difference. Rural values, community, responsibility, looking out for each other, helping each other, knowing each other—that is part of what we need to be as a country.

I worry so much that we are losing a great deal of that in the way we deal with public policy. Thomas Jefferson used to say that the kind of agriculture we choose in this country affects the kind of communities we have. It affects the kind of Nation we are going to be. He was dead right about that.

That is why the issue that these folks have come to town to discuss, the 2,000 farmers, who otherwise would be in their machine shed getting ready for spring's work, working on the transmission, greasing the tractor, going to town to get the seed, all excited about

being able to finally get that tractor started and getting out and plowing the ground and putting seeds in the ground, are instead over here about a block away. And I am going to get there soon. They are here to say family farming matters to this country and Congress must do something to help or we will be left with corporate agriculture from California to Maine, and it will be different. A part of America will be gone forever. Some say: Well, that's the way it is. The family farm is like the little diner left behind when an interstate highway comes through, and it is too bad; it was a wonderful place to have soup and sandwiches. But that is life.

Mr. BYRD. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. DORGAN. Of course, I will.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, let us go back 2,000 years to the small family farms on the Italian peninsula. Those small family farms produced the rugged soldiers who helped ancient Rome to conquer all of the countries around the Mediterranean basin. Those family farms produced men and women who believed in the gods. They were pagan gods, but those ancient Romans believed in those gods, venerated their forefathers, their ancestors, taught their children to respect authority, to respect law, to respect the state. And the ancient Romans felt that the gods had in mind a particular destiny for their country. Each Roman felt that it was his duty to help to promote that destiny of his state. And then came the latifundia, the great corporate farms. Senators bought up land. They became huge farms. The farmers, the peasants, left the land and migrated into the cities and became a part of the mob that sought the theater and free bread.

And when that happened, remember that the Roman legions, which constituted the greatest military fighting machine of that time, were able to get their recruits from the farms. When the peasants left the land, left the home, and the home deteriorated and the belief in the gods dimmed and faded, the great Roman Senate weakened, lost its way, lost its nerve, and without being forced to ceded to the dictators—the Caesars, and later the Emperors—the power of the purse, that was the beginning of the end. Rome collapsed.

The same thing has happened here in America. When we look at our colonial forebears, they had the stamina, the stern discipline of the ancient Romans. They believed in a creator, and the home was where the values were inculcated into the young people. They respected the law, they respected authority, they respected their fathers and mothers, and they took seriously the Biblical injunction ''honor thy father and thy mother.''

We can take a lesson from the ancient Romans and many a leaf out of their history because there were several parallels between those ancient Romans and our colonial ancestors and the America that was—not the America that is, but the America that was—up until 50 years ago, or some such.

I am in the very mood at this moment to commend my distinguished colleague, the Senator from North Dakota, Mr. DORGAN, when he talks about these farmers. They are the people who toil the earth. They have to depend upon the weather; it is uncertain. They can't count on, from month to month or year to year, what the weather is going to be, how dependable it is going to be. What a life they have to live. It is a rugged life, but it is a clean life—clean in that they understand what it is to be near the soil and near God's great tradition. I wish that more of our young people grew up on the farm. There was a time in this country when 90 percent of the population was from the farms. That day is long gone.

I thank the Senator, who so often enlightens this great body on issues of importance to the country. He has his head screwed on right. His heart is where it ought to be. He has sound wisdom. He has done a great service today speaking about the small farmers. I personally thank him for what he means to the Senate and to the people of his State.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, let me say to my colleague from West Virginia that I am humbled by his words. I was on a radio talk show earlier this morning for an hour or so. When he said I had my head screwed on right, I just say that is the nicest thing said about me all day.

I appreciate very much the comments the Senator made.

I also say this is not about nostalgia. It is about a country having to choose the kind of future it wants, a country measuring what it wants to achieve with its economy, and a country that determines what has value.

It is so much a disconnection to me that we are the largest arms seller in the world by far—somewhere around $10 to 12 billion a year. A fair amount of those purchases are from countries that can least afford to purchase jet fighter planes, tanks, and weapons of war, and, yet, they do.

In those same Third World countries that are purchasing arms, people are desperately hungry. At the same time that people are desperately hungry for food in so many places in the world, and hundreds of millions of people go to bed with an ache deep in their belly because they haven't had enough to eat, then in Mohall, ND, in the morning someone will load a two-ton truck with wheat and drive to the elevator and will be told by the grain trade: Your food doesn't have value. Your food just doesn't have value. Yet we know it costs you $4.50 a bushel to produce it, but it is only worth $2.30 a bushel because it just doesn't have value.

What a serious disconnection. We need to find a way to create value in our country for that which matters: the production and work of family farmers and the risks of what family farmers produce; yes, food for a hungry world, but also the social structure of a community and a rural economy.

Mr. Critchfield, a wonderful author, wrote a book called ''Those Days.'' He talked about the ''seed bed'' of family values in America for over two centuries from family farms to small towns to big cities. It was always the ''seed bed'' of family values.

When a man named Ernest in Regent, ND, collapsed of a heart attack right near harvest, his neighbors brought the combines over to take his wheat off the field? If his neighbors were in corporate America, they would be called competitors. But on family farms, they are neighbors. And they are part of a social structure that works together. But they can't work together and make a living when grain prices have collapsed. They need a safety net of some type that says: You matter, you have value, and you are important to our country's economy.

I wish to mention two other quick items that affect family farmers in a very significant way. They came to town today. In fact, I was on an airplane with some of them last evening. Most of them came by bus but a few came on the airplane—last evening, today, and tomorrow.

Two things will happen here in Washington, DC: One, the Federal Reserve Board will meet. When they do, it won't be as if they are doing it in front of television cameras. It will be behind closed doors. They will make a decision in secret. We will not be a part of it. There will be no discussion and no debate. These central bankers will make a decision about whether to increase interest rates once again. All of the evidence is that they will do so.

Those poor farmers who are coming to town asking for some assistance when prices have collapsed will find one more time that the Federal Reserve Board has boosted their cost of production by increasing interest rates.

What is the justification for that? The answer is none. There is no justification. Workers' productivity is up in this country—way up. Do workers in this country not have a right to more compensation if they are more productive?

Mr. Greenspan and the Federal Reserve Board are worried about inflation. The core inflation rate that has been recently announced in both the Producer Price Index and the Consumer Price Index, which indicates that inflation is not a serious threat in this country. As I said, productivity is growing. Yet, somehow, Mr. Greenspan fashions himself as a set of human brake pads whose sole mission in life is to try to slow down the American economy.

It is wrong for the Federal Reserve Board to believe that too many people are working and that we are growing too fast. They are worried about that because they believe it will provoke more inflation. They have believed

that for the last several years, and they have been wrong, wrong, wrong in every circumstance. But it has been used as justification to increase interest rates. That adds to the burden these family farmers have to bear as they go out to try to borrow money to buy the seeds, the fertilizer, and the fuel with which to put in their spring crops.

The Federal Reserve Board tomorrow will add to the burdens of these farmers, in my judgment, in a manner that is wholly unjustified. Productivity last year grew at a substantial 3 percent rate. That surge pushed the unit labor costs down by 2.5 percent in the fourth quarter in 1999.

I have talked at length about the Federal Reserve Board. I don't mean to cast disrespect on their motives as people. I have said that I commend Alan Greenspan for his public service but disagree with him from a policy standpoint very significantly.

But there is no justification for this Federal Reserve Board, the last dinosaur of our government, that does all of its business in secret. What other unit of government closes its doors and then says, ''Let's decide what we want to do next to the American people''?

If Mr. Greenspan, as has been the subject of some of his recent pronouncements, believes that the stock market is moving too high—''irrational exuberance'' he once called it—then he can take action to deal with that. He could increase margin requirements, which I think he probably ought to do. But instead of doing that—and he doesn't want to do that—he says: I will have all the American people, especially producers, pay higher interest charges. It is unwise, unfair, and risky, in my judgment, to raise interests at a time when fuel costs are rising and commodity prices all across the board have collapsed. I think it risks a significant slowdown in this economy.

I regret that they will take that action tomorrow. If they do, I will be here to speak again briefly about it.

Let me take 2 additional minutes to talk about one other issue that will be announced tomorrow. In addition to the Federal Reserve Board meeting, there will be an announcement tomorrow morning by the Commerce Department about America's trade deficit. I expect once again that the monthly trade deficit will be near record level.

What does that mean? It means that those family farmers who are gathered today in Washington, DC, asking for some help will once again see the consequences of a trade policy that has not worked.

We are not exporting nearly enough. We are importing too much. We find closed markets for agricultural commodities all around the world. Even when we negotiate new trade agreements, the negotiations are not the independent, kind of hard-nosed negotiations that you would expect on behalf of our producers. We do not, as a country, stand up for our producers' interests.

I will talk at some later time about the recent bilateral trade agreement with China. I have spoken at great length about the NAFTA agreement, and Canada and Mexico, and so on. But family farmers and others have a right, in my judgment, to be very concerned about these kinds of policies.

I will show a chart about the trade deficit. This chart shows what is happening to this country's merchandise trade deficit. It was $347 billion in 1999.

Let me mention China. I want to mention it just in a microcosm. We reached an agreement with China only months ago. A significant part of this $347 billion was nearly $70 billion with China alone.

Let me take automobiles, for example, because there is not a lot of trade in automobiles between the United States and China. But in our trade agreement with China, as I understand it, after a phase in, we reached an agreement by which China will have only a 25-percent tariff on U.S. automobiles that will be sent to China. We would have a 2.5-percent tariff on Chinese automobiles into this country. So we reached a trade agreement which says we will phase this in slowly. But after it is fully phased in, China, you can have a 10-times greater tariff on automobiles going into China than we would have.

I ask a question: Who is negotiating, and on whose behalf? We should get some uniforms and jerseys that say ''U.S.A.'' on them. At least when they sit down we would understand who they are and we could demand that they work for our interests and demand reciprocal agreements that say treat us like we treat you. Open your markets.

I mention automobiles, because it is not of great consequence in that particular trade agreement. But I am going to talk at greater length about some of the other issues as well. I mention it, because tomorrow the Commerce Department will, once again, announce the monthly trade deficit. It will, in my judgment, signal the storm clouds that exist in this area to which we must respond. Our economy is wonderful. We live in a great country. We are blessed with all kinds of good news. However, we must address this issue.

I finish by telling the Senator from West Virginia what happened to me at the WTO meetings in Seattle in December. Everyone remembers how raucous those WTO sessions turned out to be, especially with demonstrators in the street. Something happened I will relate that reminds everyone once again of who we are and where we are. A group of House and Senate Members were meeting with a group of 10 or 12 European parliamentarians across an oblong table, talking about the differences between Europe and the United States in trade, the beef issue, and the Roquefort trade issue.

Mr. Rocard, the former Prime Minister of France, leaned over and said: Mr. Senator, I want you to understand something. We are talking about disputes between the United States and Europe. I want you to understand how I feel about your country. I was a 14-year-old boy on the streets of Paris, France, in 1944 when the Liberation Army marched into my country and removed the Nazis from my country. When I was a 14-year-old boy, standing on the streets, when those American soldiers marched into my country, a young black American soldier reached out his hand and gave me an apple. I want you to understand that I will never, ever forget that moment and what it meant to me and what it meant to my country.

I got chills as I listened to that. We have, as a country, done so much for so many around the world. We are self-critical and tend to forget the remarkable things we have done.

This fellow said to me: I will go to my grave having very special feelings about what your country, what your soldier, what your commitment was to me, to my family, and to my country.

That is something we should understand. We have a great capacity to do good things. As a democracy, we make some mistakes from time to time. But we have a great capacity to do good things in our abilities to make choices regarding public policy, in developing the kinds of policies that are produced in this Chamber. All of us must, from our various centers of interest around America, come here and with passion make the case for the things we think are important.

The Senator from West Virginia makes passionate arguments on behalf of the families who have been mining America's coal in the hills of Appalachia. I listened with wonder to his description of what is happening in those small communities. He understands that those from farm country, from North Dakota, South Dakota, Kansas, and elsewhere feel the same way, with the same passion, about the people we represent who are struggling and in many ways confront the same problems of collapsed commodity prices. There is the notion by some that this is just all nostalgia, not hard-nosed market economics.

That is why, as we do all of this, as we engage in these debates, we must as a country think through the public policy questions with better clarity, especially with the understanding that tomorrow's economy and tomorrow's country is what we decide it will be. We have a right to make these decisions. Europe has decided it wants family farmers in its future. It wants rural Europe to be healthy and family farmers to make it. Why? Because they understand that family farms produce more than just grain or livestock. They produce something that is social in nature—community, a rural lifestyle and culture that is important. That is something Europe is already reconciled to, and we ought to, as well.

I have taken far more time than I intended. Let me end as I started. I will

go to the farmers' lunch near the Russell Building. They are serving a $10 lunch for 39 cents because farmers are here, 2,000-fold, saying: This is our share of the food dollar. It is not enough. We cannot make a living. We need help. We don't need charity. We need a little attention from Congress, better trade agreements, a better farm program, a little action on the antitrust front to deal with the concentrations of monopolies that exist, and a little understanding that we matter to America's future. We produce food. It is a hungry world. Food matters. Congress, pay attention. That is all they are saying.

With that, I will have lunch with friends of mine.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). The distinguished Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Before the distinguished Senator goes to lunch, would he agree with me that Oliver Goldsmith, writing in ''The Deserted Village,'' must have had our family farmers in mind when he said:

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills of prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;
Princes and Lords may flourish or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

Is there anything more fitting by way of poetry than Oliver Goldsmith's words in ''The Deserted Village'' when he talked about the bold peasantry?

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, as always, the Senator from West Virginia has captured in just a minute, with verse that comes from memory, something that I have not been able to say in 45 minutes. He is absolutely correct.

Again, let me thank him for being on the floor as I made the presentation.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the distinguished Senator.

ELEVEN-MONTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, today marks the 11-month anniversary of the tragic school shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado. On April 20, 1999, 2 boys walked into their high school, armed to the hilt, and killed 13 students and faculty members before taking their own lives. Despite the horrible nature of this crime, and those that have followed it in Georgia, in Michigan, in the District of Columbia, and in other places throughout the country, the Congress has shown precious little leadership in exploring ways to help prevent mayhem in our schools.

Last May, in response to the Columbine shooting, this Senate passed the Juvenile Justice bill by an overwhelming bipartisan majority of 73–25. Despite this strong show of bipartisan agreement, the legislation is bogged down in a morass of election year politics. Despite the fact that the American people are crying out for some leadership on this issue, the Congress is proving itself to be uncaring, if not irrelevant.

There is plenty of controversy to go around anytime any measure comes before the Congress which deals with gun violence. We have all heard repeatedly the cautionary slogan chanted by some, ''guns don't kill people, people kill people.'' But increasingly in recent years it has been children who are wielding guns against their classmates. Perhaps the slogan should be changed to ''guns don't kill children, children kill children.'' Sadly, that slogan now has the ring of reality, but, I doubt that anyone will be lobbying for gun rights with those words imprinted on their lecture.

The Senate-passed legislation contained a number of important provisions to not only crack down on violent juvenile offenders, but also to reduce the potential for weapons to fall into the hands of children who may not understand all of the dangers that the weapons pose.

The Senate legislation is a compromise between the rights of the individual to keep and bear arms and the safety of the public to be protected from those who should not have those guns. The bill would require that every handgun sold must have a trigger safety lock or secure container. It would require background checks on all buyers at gun shows. The legislation would ban the youth possession of semiautomatic assault weapons and their high-capacity ammunition clips. And it would bar anyone convicted of a violent felony as a juvenile from possessing a gun. These are commonsense provisions on which I hope parents and gun owners alike could agree.

Last week, the Nation's leading gun manufacturer, Smith & Wesson, imposed upon itself many of the provisions contained in the Senate version of the Juvenile Justice bill, including trigger locks and background checks. If Smith & Wesson can see the wisdom of balancing public safety with private ownership rights, why can this Congress not do the same?

The last time—and, in fact, the only time—that the conference committee on the Juvenile Justice legislation met was last August. Time is of the essence. I urge the conferees on both sides of the hill to meet and to settle their differences. The longer they wait, the longer the delay, the better the chances are that some further tragedy will come along and steal the lives of more innocent children. We might make a difference. We might save a life. Why not have the courage to try?

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator may proceed.

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, I am pleased to follow the distinguished Senator from West Virginia, who always has most interesting remarks. I am pleased to associate myself with his comments as well.

HIGH FUEL PRICES

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, it is hard to pick up a newspaper or turn on a television set or read any kind of political commentary or watch one of the Sunday morning talk shows without having the subject very quickly turn to the high price that we in this country are paying for gasoline. There is a certain amount of deja vu when you look at some of these situations: Here we go again. Many Members remember quite well the problems this country faced in the 1970s when we had the long lines at our gas stations around this country. People were screaming and hollering about the lack of gas for their automobiles and were also complaining about the price of that gas if they were lucky enough to get it.

Here we are in the year 2000, and basically the problem is very similar to what it was back in 1973. It is interesting to me to see so many people wringing their hands, struggling to find out exactly what is causing this problem. It is not, indeed, a mystery at all. The problem is one of supply and demand. We are using far more gas and oil in this country than we were in the past decade, than in the past 5 years, in fact, more than we used last year. Yet we are producing substantially less than we are using.

During the 1970s oil embargo, many of us, particularly those from oil-producing States, were saying the problem would only get worse unless we did something to become energy self-sufficient. In those days, the 1970s, we were importing about 36 percent of the oil we consumed in the United States. When the OPEC nations just slightly tightened their valves and started producing a little bit less, that 36 percent brought this Nation to its knees and created the long lines at the gas stations.

Many of us at that time said it was only going to get worse unless we concentrated on trying to be more energy self-sufficient in this country; we would have to concentrate on making sure we were producing, in an environmentally safe manner, the necessary energy to run this Nation.

I wonder what people would say if we imported 50 percent of all the food we needed to feed the citizens of our country. I bet that if we were 50-percent dependent on foreign countries for food in this country, there would be long lines marching in Washington, people clamoring for our Nation to get its act together and become more self-sufficient, producing the food we need. I wonder why it is any different when it comes